

Members

Rep. Ron Herrell
Rep. Jeff Thompson
Rep. Gary Cook
Sen. Beverly Gard
Sen. Lindel Hume
Dr. Jim Gammon
Dr. Dennis Clark
Gwen White
Jeff Martin
C. Steven Gohmann
John Maher
Paul Johnson
Brian Daggy
Dr. Rae Schnapp
Kerry Michael Manders
Greta Hawvermale
John Fekete
Dr. Greg Steele
Howard W. Cundiff
Tom Simon



WATER DATA TASK FORCE

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Authority: P.L. 140-2000 (SEA 431)

MEETING MINUTES¹

Meeting Date: November 16, 2000
Meeting Time: 1:30 P.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St., Room 233
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Rep. Ron Herrell; Rep. Gary Cook; Sen. Beverly Gard; Dr. Jim Gammon; Dr. Dennis Clark; Gwen White; Jeff Martin; C. Steven Gohmann; John Maher; Paul Johnson; Greta Hawvermale; John Fekete; Dr. Greg Steele; Howard W. Cundiff; Tom Simon.

Members Absent: Rep. Jeff Thompson; Sen. Lindel Hume; Brian Daggy; Dr. Rae Schnapp; Kerry Michael Manders.

The meeting was called to order, and the members of the Water Data Task Force were introduced.

¹ Exhibits and other materials referenced in these minutes can be inspected and copied in the Legislative Information Center in Room 230 of the State House in Indianapolis, Indiana. Requests for copies may be mailed to the Legislative Information Center, Legislative Services Agency, 200 West Washington Street, Indianapolis, IN 46204-2789. A fee of \$0.15 per page and mailing costs will be charged for copies. These minutes are also available on the Internet at the General Assembly homepage. The URL address of the General Assembly homepage is <http://www.ai.org/legislative/>. No fee is charged for viewing, downloading, or printing minutes from the Internet.

The members of the Water Data Task Force were appointed by the Environmental Quality Service Council ("EQSC"). As Chairman of the EQSC, Rep. Herrell offered to serve as chairman of the Task Force. Rep. Herrell's selection as Chairman of the Task Force was approved by consent.

Matt Rueff, Indiana Department of Environmental Management ("IDEM") Office of Water Management ("OWM"), began his presentation entitled "Indiana Department of Environmental Management Water Quality Data." A paper copy of the slide presentation is included as Exhibit 1.

Mr. Rueff first noted the legislative charge of the Task Force, which is to assess the program needs of IDEM to collect adequate physical, chemical, and biological data used by IDEM. His presentation focused on three areas with respect to water quality data: the historical perspective, the Surface Water Quality Monitoring Strategy ("SWQMS"), and future water quality data issues.

With respect to the historical perspective, Mr. Rueff stated that fixed station water monitoring began in 1957, and was then expanded in the 1970's as required under the Clean Water Act. Although monitoring continued through the 1980's, by the early 1990's, past practices and resources were insufficient to meet the state's goal of restoring and maintaining the "chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the waters of the State" (327 IAC 2-1-1.5). In 1996, OWM began a five year cycle of assessing water quality in Indiana's five major river basins. The first five year cycle was completed this year.

Mr. Rueff then addressed the key elements of the SWQMS. A watershed probabilistic sampling samples various characteristics to assess and characterize the overall water quality throughout the major river basins. A macroinvertebrate community assessment identifies impaired streams or watersheds by collecting samples and performing rapid bioassessment techniques. Fish community assessments are conducted for streams and watersheds, and are expressed as an IBI Index, which rates the ability of a stream to support aquatic life. Fish tissue analyses are also conducted, and fish consumption advisories are issued. The 2000 Indiana Fish Consumption Advisory is included as Exhibit 2. Habitat assessments are conducted along with water sampling, using a Qualitative Habitat Evaluation Index. Data is collected to evaluate sediment contamination. PCB contamination is of particular concern. Lakes are monitored, considering physical, biological, and chemical parameters, to ascertain the status and trends of the trophic state. Results are expressed in the Indiana Trophic State Index. Fixed station monitoring points have been increased to approximately 160 in the past year. These stations collect on a monthly basis water chemistry, bacteriological, and field analytical data, providing information for trend analysis. The Indiana State Department of Health does a tremendous amount of work in evaluating the samples. Ambient concentrations and trends of pesticides in surface waters have been determined under the Pesticide Sampling Program. Particular attention is being paid to the effects on young aquatic life of pesticide spikes in the spring. E coli sampling occurs at sites throughout the state, and a van containing a mobile laboratory for this purpose has been acquired.

Mr. Rueff then addressed the Assessment Information Management System ("AIMS"). Over decades, data has been collected at different times by different bodies using different data bases. This data must be accessible. Work progresses on integrating past and current data in AIMS, to be made available on the Internet.

Water sampling is also used to conduct pollution source identification. Water quality is monitored at problem sites in streams to ascertain the existence of ongoing deleterious water quality conditions and the source of the conditions.

Mr. Rueff noted that the 2000 Indiana Water Quality Report (Exhibit 3) had been made available to members of the Task Force. The report reflects IDEM's collection of data and assessment of water quality throughout the state.

Mr. Rueff stated that the Total Maximum Daily Load ("TMDL") Advisory Group has met twice. The Group is considering whether streams have attained the established uses of fishable, swimmable, and drinkable. Many streams do not meet the use standards. Appendix A of Exhibit 3 (page 65) is a list of impaired waters prioritized for the development of TMDL's. So far, one TMDL has been completed (Kokomo Creek watershed, Howard County). There are 208 impaired water bodies, and TMDL's are to be developed for all of them over the next thirteen years. Additional staff and other resources are being dedicated to this project. Support is being provided by the United States Corps of Engineers.

Quality assurance and quality certification of data is carried out by the environmental toxicology and chemistry section of the OWM. That section ensures that the data meets scientific standards, and does evaluations for NPDES permits.

OWM also: (a) deals with special projects, such as fish kills and the trace metals project; and (b) works with and receives information from many state, federal, and private entities.

Future goals for OWM include improvement of AIMS, assessment of the time lag between field samplings, assessments under Sec. 305(b) of the Clean Water Act, listing of impaired water bodies under Sec. 303(d) of the Clean Water Act, TMDL development and modeling, pursuit of special projects, and expansion of the use of water quality data from other sources.

Rep. Herrell asked whether there is a test to determine how deeply sediment is contaminated. In some more complicated cases where sediment removal might be contemplated, sediment cores are taken to determine the concentrations of contaminants. Rep. Herrell also asked whether testing is done upstream and downstream. Where deep core samples are taken, a grid of the area is also made that includes upstream and downstream samples. Rep. Herrell further asked how the data collected is being used to clean up contamination. The IDEM Office of Land Quality is charged with cleaning up contamination. Data is used to evaluate on a case by case basis whether to clean up hot spots, or whether the clean up might cause more harm than good.

Sen. Gard asked whether the protocols used in TMDL development are going to be adequate for the numerous future TMDL developments. Ways to improve the strategic survey process should be found for future TMDL's. There also may be ways to simplify the TMDL model development.

Greta Hawvermale asked whether there might be ways to improve cooperative efforts between localities and the state in water quality monitoring. OWM is interested in and is pursuing better cooperative efforts.

Paul Johnson asked whether automatic water sampling is used at the fixed stations. Problems with such systems, such as vandalism and the unsuitability of such systems in some circumstances, have mitigated against using automatic sampling.

Rep. Herrell asked whether OWM has any particular needs in the area of water quality data. There are forty full time scientists in the office. Resources can be strained when major special projects occur, such as the White River fish kill. Current funding levels appear to be adequate to deal with TMDL requirements for the next two years. The issue

of additional resources needed is currently under review, and a clearer picture is likely to emerge over the next two years. Rep. Herrell asked how data collection in Indiana compares to collection in other states. Region 5, which includes Indiana, has some of the most modern and advanced water quality monitoring and assessment programs. The Region 5 states compare favorably in this regard to states in other regions. Indiana stays current with other states in part through membership in various national organizations.

John Fekete complimented Mr. Rueff on the presentation, and asked whether it could be distributed to Task Force members by e-mail. Task Force members were asked to provide their e-mail addresses to Legislative Services Agency staff. A text only version of the presentation will be e-mailed to members.

Rep. Herrell noted that the EQSC terminates December 31, 2000, and that the Task Force will not be in a position to generate a report of its findings to the EQSC until after that date. However, it is anticipated that the EQSC will be extended by the General Assembly in the next session.

Rep. Herrell stated that the members will be informed of the next meeting date. The meeting was then adjourned.